

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF A TIGER

On 9th June, 1983 at around 6.00 p.m. we spotted a full grown tigress sitting near the nullah of Lakarda in Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan. Her stomach was full and she was undisturbed by our presence in the jeep, actually she appeared to be too lethargic to move. We watched her for a few minutes and drove off but she continued to sit unperturbed. Mr. Fateh Singh Rathore, Field Director, Project Tiger, observed that this tigress had three nearly full-grown cubs and she frequented this area.

Next morning around 7.00 a.m. we went to the spot again. It was a cloudy but hot summer day. The tigress was found sitting not far from the nullah in the grass near her partially eaten sambar kill. While her cubs were not observed, only the head and the front legs of the kill had remained from the previous day's eating. It had also started smelling and was infested with flies and maggots. Unlike the previous evening, on seeing us the tigress was disturbed. She picked up the kill and walked away. We followed her in our jeep at a distance.

She moved straight for the Lakarda nullah less than hundred odd yards away and entered the water. Her manner showed a definite pur-

pose. The kill was in her mouth all the while. She stood in the water for a while with the lower part of the kill dangling in it. Then quite deliberately she dunked the kill three successive times in the water as if to get rid of the fly nuisance. She settled down in the water for a while, then got up with the kill still in her mouth walked towards a bush on the bank of the nullah and hid the kill under it. She went back to the water, sat down partly in it and went to sleep quite oblivious of our presence in the jeep.

This entire episode took place in some 15-20 minutes between 7.00 a.m. to 7.30 a.m. After the tigress dozed off, we left the area. She, however, was observed by us at the same spot in the afternoon and evening of 10th June and again on 11th morning in the nearby grass. She had just killed and eaten a peacock before we arrived around 7.00 a.m. After a while she moved off.

Tigers are known to love water in the summer heat and they do carry their kills with them into the water. I had never heard of a tiger or seen one cleaning out its kill in the water in the manner observed by us.

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